



75 Middle Street  
Weymouth, MA 02189  
(781) 340-5012  
[www.weymouth.ma.us/farmers-market](http://www.weymouth.ma.us/farmers-market)

# FARMERS MARKET 2017 SEASON REVIEW

## Vision

A Weymouth where people invest in the sustainable health and happiness of the whole community.

## Mission

Our market cultivates community engagement by creating a place where residents, farmers, and producers connect for a happier, healthier Weymouth.

## Operation

- Ongoing partnership with Food Pantry to accept EBT and other non-cash payments
- New partnership with Lola Grace Events, operator of the Union Point Farmers' Market
  - Town manages Farm to Family Program/Wooden Token Payment System
  - Lola Grace Events manages all other market elements
- Town staff operates a table at the Union Point Farmers' Market
- Town equipment and supplies are stored in a mobile storage unit provided by Union Point

## Staffing

Staffing requirements have been dramatically reduced since last season.

In **2016**, the Town required **four paid** employees and **four volunteers** each week **at minimum**.

In **2017**, the Town required only **one paid** employee and **two volunteers** each week **at most**.

## 2017 Typical Market Day Staff

STAFF	POSITION/ROLE	IN-KIND/PAID/VOLUNTEER
Austin Dube	Set Up, Process Transactions, Collect and Count Tokens, Break Down	Paid
Steering Committee Member (Rotating)	Collect and Count Tokens	In-Kind
Volunteer 1	Collect and Count Tokens	Volunteer

## 2016 Typical Market Day Staff

STAFF	POSITION/ROLE	IN-KIND/PAID/VOLUNTEER
Nicholas Bulens	Coordinator and Manager	In-Kind
Austin Dube	Assistant Manager	Paid
Jeremy Clark	Set Up, Manager's Tent, Break Down	Paid
Samantha Bowman	Set Up, Manager's Tent, Break Down	Weekly Volunteer
Steven Yu	Set Up, Manager's Tent, Break Down	Weekly Volunteer
Andrew Hultin	Set Up, Break Down	Paid
Ruth Russell	Set Up, Break Down	Paid
Student Volunteer 1	Set Up, Manager's Tent, Break Down	Volunteer
Student Volunteer 2	Set Up, Manager's Tent, Break Down	Volunteer

## Market Bucks Token System

The Town's Market Bucks token system enables market shoppers to swipe an EBT or debit card in exchange for wooden tokens, which act as cash for market purchases.

There are two types of wooden tokens:

- SNAP tokens – These tokens have a face value of \$2.50 and can only be used for SNAP-eligible food purchases with participating vendors. The Food Pantry provides a “market match” up to \$20.00 per week for shoppers using an EBT card or shoppers using a debit card with a Food Pantry Client ID card.
- Debit tokens – These tokens have a face value of \$5.00 and can be used for any purchase with participating vendors. There is a \$20.00 minimum to purchase debit tokens.

A three-year *mid-season* comparison of the token system's performance was completed in September of 2017. Figures 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6 summarize this comparison.

Each year corresponds with a different market location:

- 2015 – Town Hall Parking Lot
- 2016 – Legion Memorial Field
- 2017 – Union Point @ Welcome Center

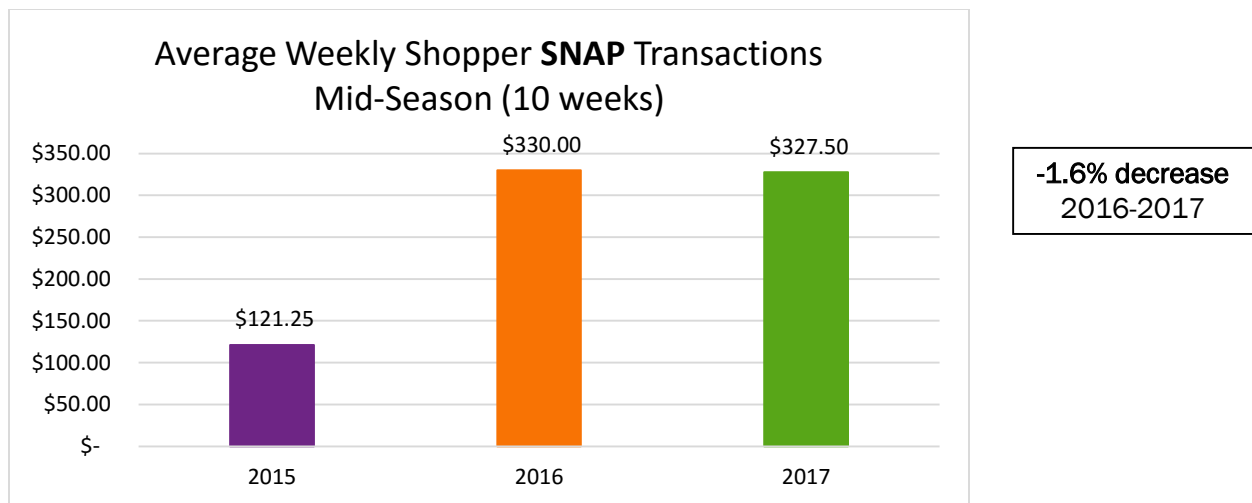


Figure 1: Mid-Season Average Weekly Shopper SNAP Transactions

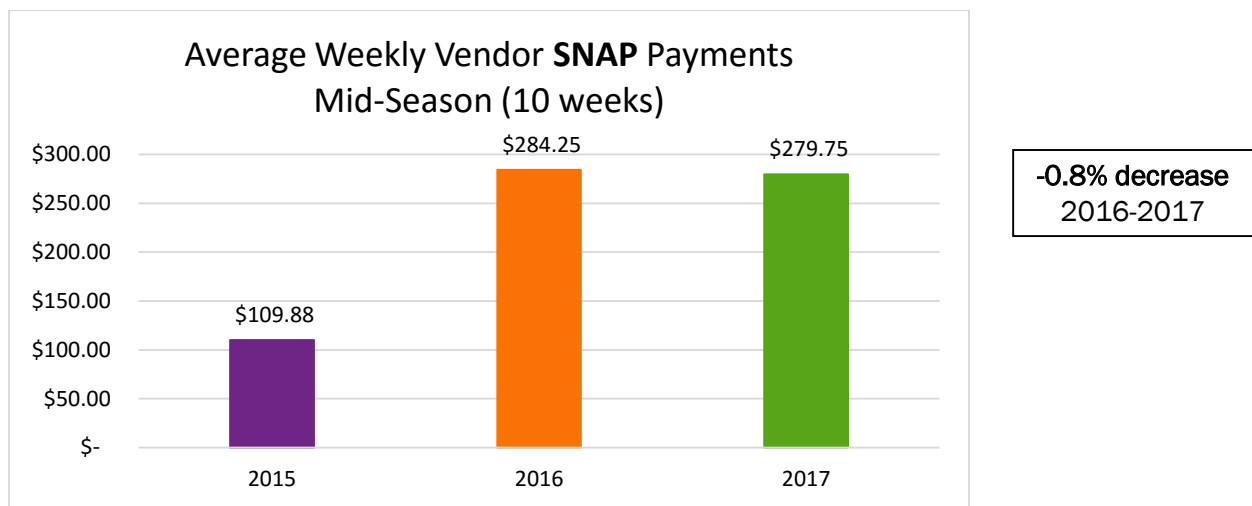


Figure 2: Mid-Season Average Weekly Vendor SNAP Payment

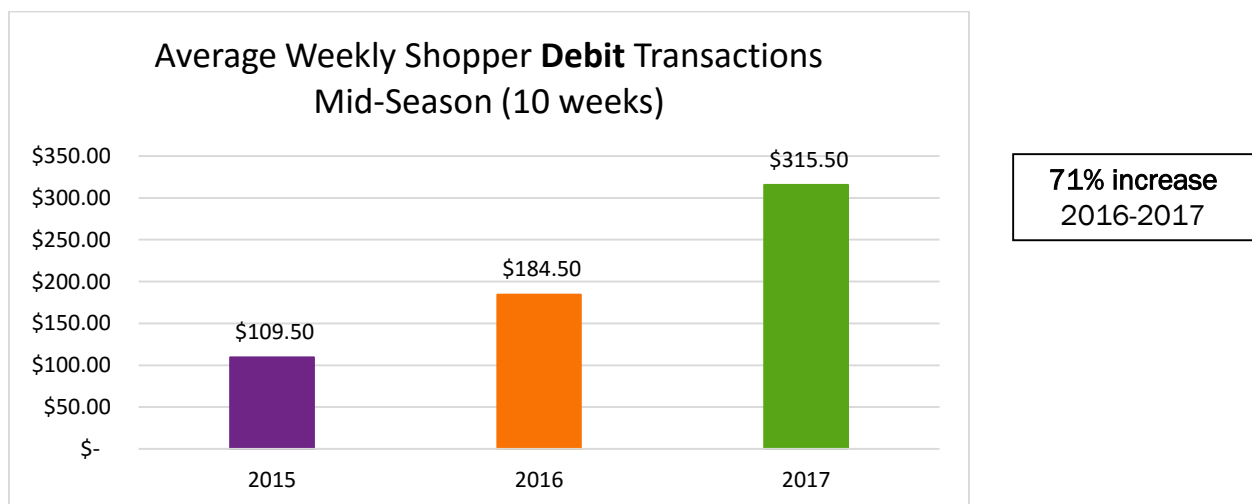


Figure 3: Mid-Season Average Weekly Shopper Debit Transactions

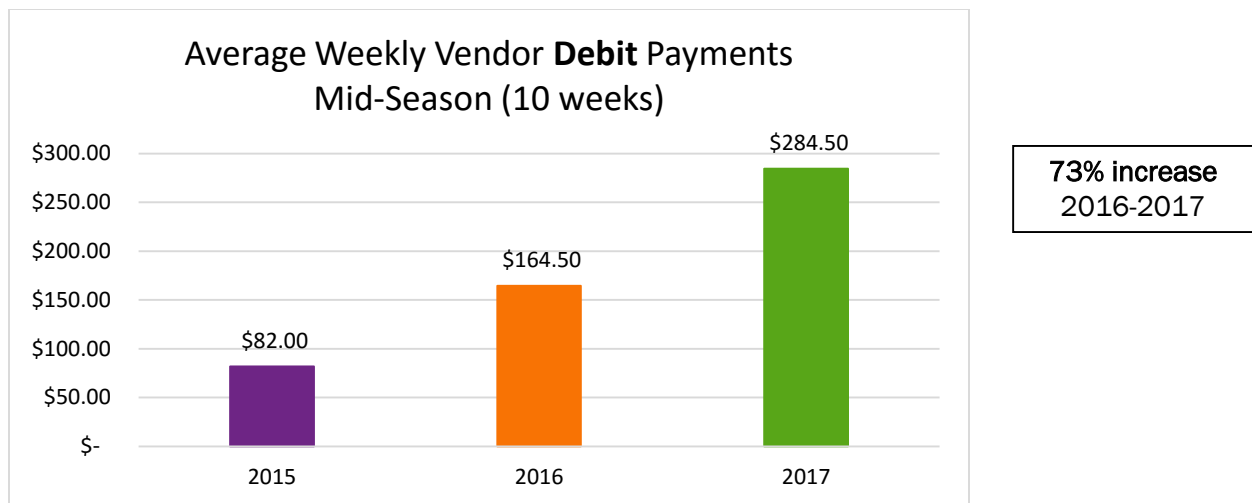


Figure 4: Mid-Season Average Weekly Vendor Debit Payments

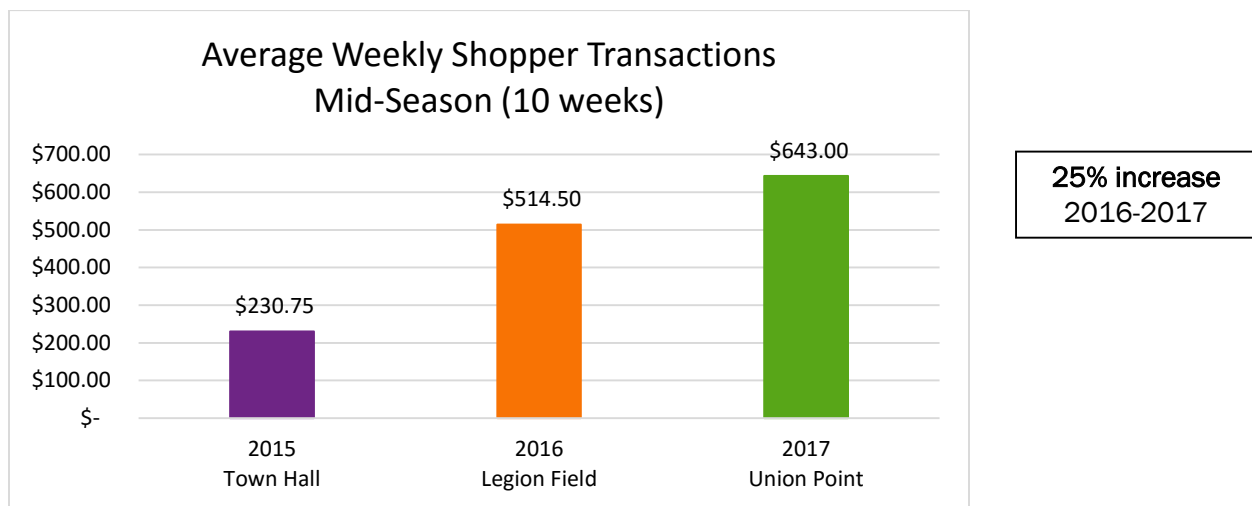


Figure 5: Mid-Season Average Weekly Shopper Transactions (SNAP and Debit)

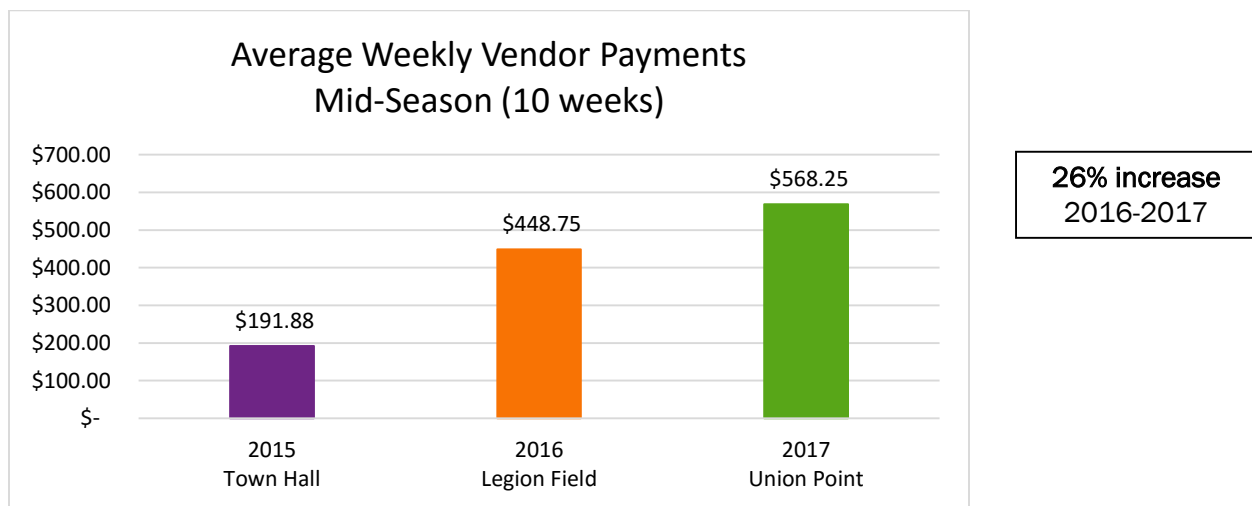


Figure 6: Mid-Season Average Weekly Vendor Payments (SNAP and Debit)

At mid-season, these data suggested the following conclusions:

- The system grew substantially between 2015 and 2016. No growth had been lost as a result of the changes implemented in 2017.
- There was virtually no change in the weekly average SNAP token transactions. The difference between 2016 and 2017 was less than two percent for both SNAP shopper transactions and vendor payments.
- Debit token transactions for shoppers and vendors had increased more than 70 percent between 2016 and 2017.
- In net, the system had experienced substantial growth, with overall purchases of market bucks up 25 percent. This growth was due entirely to shoppers using debit cards.

A three-year *full-season* comparison of the system's performance was completed in October of 2017. Figures 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, and 12 summarize this comparison.

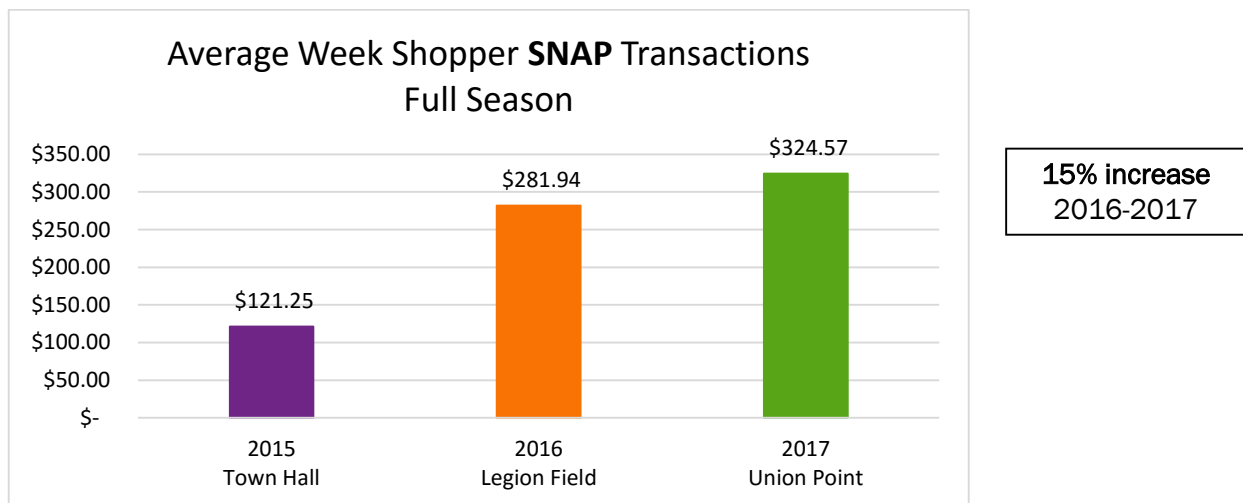


Figure 7: Full Season Average Weekly Shopper SNAP Transactions

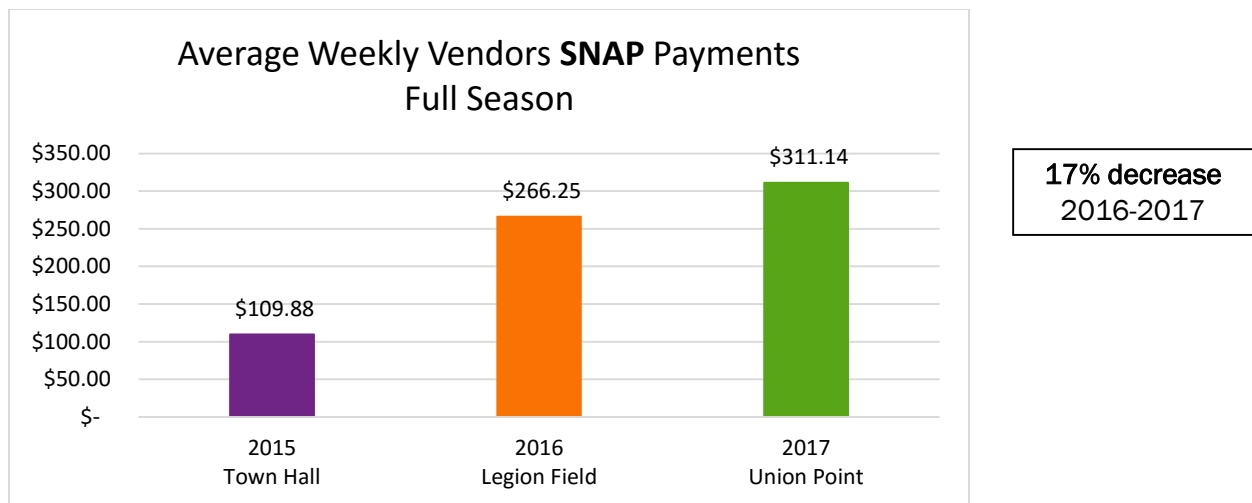


Figure 8: Full Season Average Weekly Vendor SNAP Payments

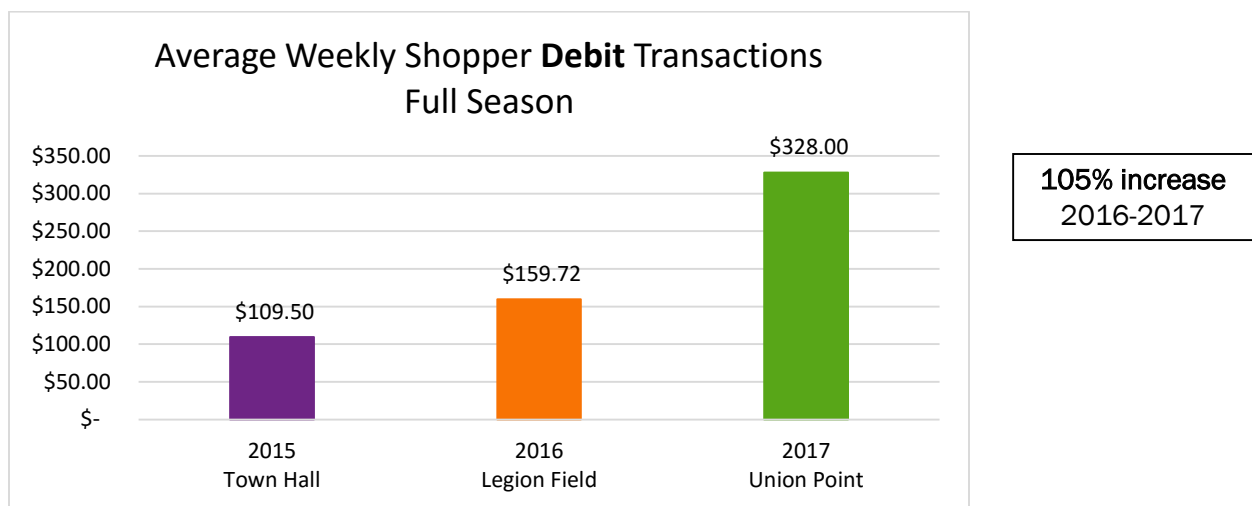


Figure 9: Full Season Average Weekly Shopper Debit Transactions

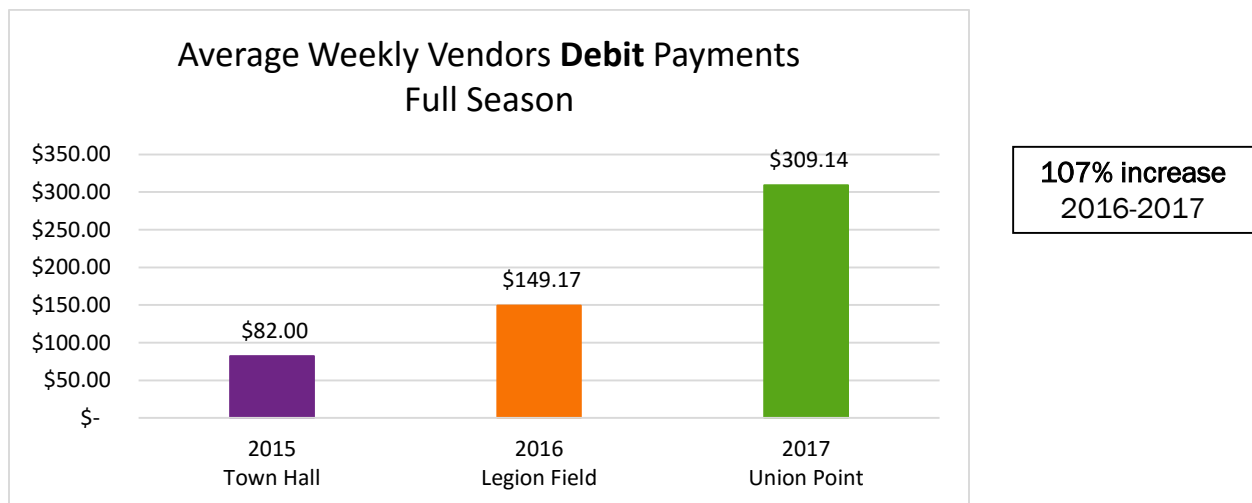


Figure 10: Full Season Average Weekly Vendor Debit Payments

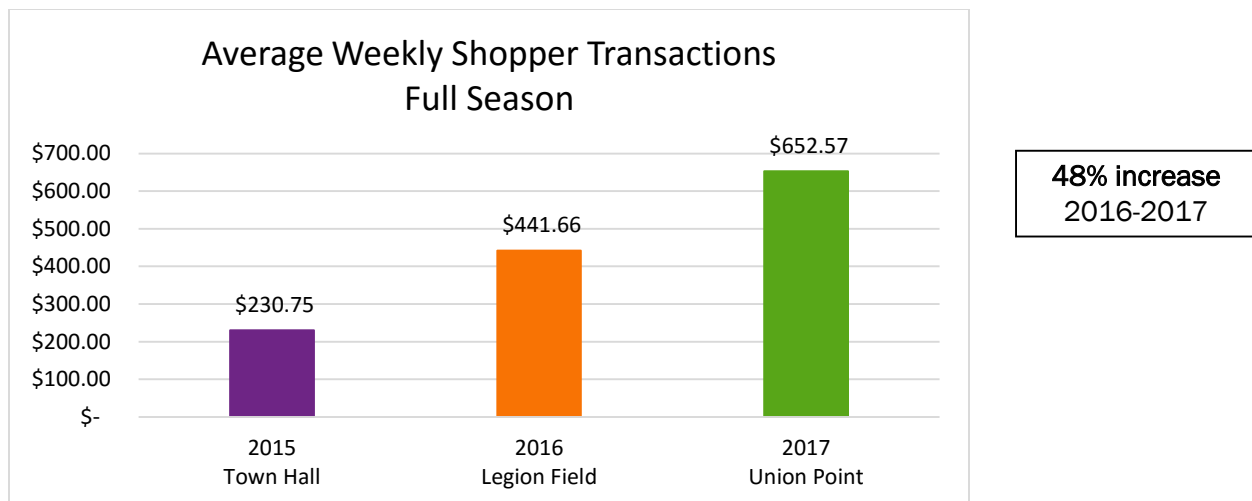


Figure 11: Full Season Average Weekly Shopper Transactions (SNAP and Debit)

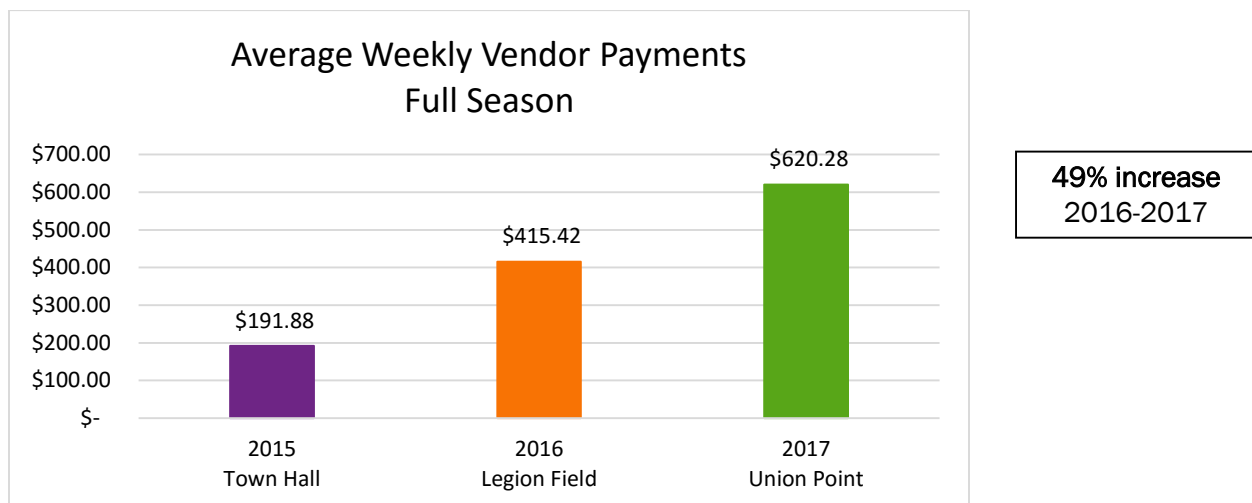


Figure 12: Full Season Average Weekly Vendor Payments (SNAP and Debit)

These data suggest the following conclusions:

- SNAP token transactions for shoppers and vendors increased more than 15 percent between 2016 and 2017, breaking the level-service trend observed at mid-season.
- Debit token transactions for shoppers and vendors increased over 100 percent, more than doubling between 2016 and 2017.
- In net, the system experienced substantial growth, with overall purchases of market bucks up 48 percent. This growth was due largely to shoppers using debit cards, though there was a statistically significant increase in shoppers using SNAP benefits. This suggests that the market attracted a new cliental while maintaining service levels for low-income families.

In addition, the following statements can be made about the performance of the wooden token system for 2017:

- In 2017, the farmers market helped families in need purchase \$5,680 in fresh food and food products, up \$605 or 12 percent from 2016. Nearly half (49 percent) was purchased using “match” dollars generously funded by the Weymouth Food Pantry.
- In 2017, the farmers market facilitated \$5,410 in debit card sales, up \$2,535 or 88 percent compared to 2016.
- In 2017, vendors cashed in \$10,855 in market bucks, up \$3,377.50 or 45 percent from 2016. This money went directly into the hands of local farms and small businesses, helping to support the local economy.
- In 2017, for every \$1.00 in market bucks spent, \$0.59 cents was used to purchase farm-fresh fruits and vegetables.

The Farmer’s Market Steering Committee speculates that the following factors have contributed to the performance of the wooden token system this year:

- Younger, plastic-oriented demographic at Union Point
- Promotion of the state’s new Healthy Incentive Program (HIP) for SNAP shoppers
- Proximity to dog park and playground

## **Market Variety**

A comparison of the 2016 Weymouth Farmer’s Market’s vendors and the 2017 Union Point Farmers’ Market’s vendors is provided below.

The comparison demonstrates that as a result of the new partnership between the markets, the Union Point Farmers’ Market is sustaining a significantly larger number and greater variety of vendors, particularly food and plant vendors, compared to the farmers market at Legion Memorial Field.



	2016 LEGION FIELD	2017 UNION POINT
Farmers/Growers	4	6
Bakeries	3	2
Honey	1	2
Eggs	0	1
Fish	1	0
Meat	0	1
Cheese/Dips/Spreads	0	3
Preserves	0	1
Sauces	1	1
Other Food	2	4
Other Plants	2	1
Non-Food or Plants	6	12
<b>Total</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>32</b>

**NOTE:** The total tally under the 2017 Union Point column is 34; but two vendors are listed in multiple categories. The actual number of vendors is 32 at Union Point.

## Market Expenses

The Weymouth Farmer's Market has relied on three funding sources in recent years:

1. Market "Gift" Account, within the Community Services Revolving Fund
2. Mass in Motion Grant Funds
3. Recreation Revolving Fund

### 2017 Market "Gift" Account Expenses

CATEGORY/DESCRIPTION	COST
<b>Equipment and Supplies</b>	
Wooden Tokens	\$ 117.17
<b>MARKET GIFT ACCT. TOTAL 2017 EXPENSES</b>	<b>\$ 117.17</b>
<b>CURRENT AVAILABLE BALANCE</b>	<b>\$ 3,051.40</b>

### 2017 Market Expenses by Funding Source

SOURCE	EXPENSES	COST
Market Gift Acct.	See Above Table	\$ 117
Mass in Motion Grant	Banner, Printing, Tent, T-shirts	\$ 1,160
Recreation Rev. Fund	Staff	\$ 759
<b>TOTAL REVENUE</b>		<b>\$ 0</b>
<b>TOTAL 2017 SEASON COST</b>		<b>\$ 2,036</b>

Funding for the Farm to Family Program's "match" dollars was generously provided by the Weymouth Food Pantry. In 2017, the Farm to Family Program distributed \$2,765.00 in match dollars.

## 2016 Market Revenue and Expenses by Funding Source

SOURCE	EXPENSES	COST
Market Gift Acct.	See Above Table	\$ 5,985
Mass in Motion Grant	Marketing, Printing, Supplies	\$ 4,100
Recreation Rev. Fund	Equipment, Staff	\$ 4,990
<b>TOTAL REVENUE</b>		<b>\$ 868</b>
<b>TOTAL NET 2016 SEASON COST (EXPENSES - REVENUE)</b>		<b>\$ 14,207</b>

The **2016** season saw unusually high costs in supplies and equipment due to the market's change in hours and location. However, **the responsibilities of a market manager were provided in-kind, and therefore are NOT reflected in the net cost of \$14,207.**

In 2016, management responsibilities for the market increased proportionally with the number of employees, shoppers, vendors, volunteers, and special events. The Town-employee who voluntarily filled this position was unable to undertake these responsibilities in 2017.

The Market Manager role requires a commitment up to 20 hours a week to manage the market's recruiting, accounting, social media, marketing, website development, customer service, vendor relations, event planning, volunteers, and more. The Steering Committee estimated the following hours and pay necessary for a market manager position:

### Market Manager Estimated Hours

	PERIOD	WEEKS	TOTAL HOURS
Pre-Season Phase 1	JAN - MAR	12 WKS @ 1 HR/WK	12 HRS
Pre-Season Phase 2	APR - MAY	8 WKS @ 7+ HR/WK	56 HRS
Peak Season	JUN - Mid-OCT	20 WKS @ 15-20 HR/KW	300 - 400 HRS
Post Season	Mid-OCT - DEC	10 WKS @ 1 HR/WK	10 HRS

### Market Manager Estimated Pay

HOURLY PAY	HOURS	TOTAL PAY
\$ 19	375 - 400	\$ 7,125 - \$ 7,600
\$ 23	375 - 400	\$ 8,625 - \$ 9,200
\$ 19	475 - 500	\$ 9,025 - \$ 9,500
\$ 23	475 - 500	\$ 10,925 - \$ 11,500
<b>50 WKS @ 375 TO 500 TOTAL HRS</b>		<b>\$ 7,125 - \$ 11,500</b>

## Steering Committee Recommendations

Based on the market's performance in 2017, the Weymouth Farmer's Market Steering Committee makes the following recommendations for future seasons:

- **Continue partnership with Union Point.** In 2017, the Weymouth Farmer's Market was a partner of the Union Point Farmers' Market, supporting a single, comprehensive market experience for residents. This partnership cultivated better attendance, higher sales, greater product variety, a more diverse clientele, and a greater number of local food vendors, all while maintaining service levels for low-income families participating in the Weymouth Farmer's Market's Farm to Family Program. It is recommended that the Town of Weymouth continue this partnership in future years, as the resulting market has provided a healthier, more vibrant community experience than either Union Point or the Town of Weymouth has previously been able to achieve. A market of this caliber has the potential to be sustained for many years, provided there is commitment from both partners to maintain relations. Through its partnership with Union Point, the Steering Committee believes it has found an operational model that will sustain a local farmers market in Weymouth for the long term, and will continue to cultivate community engagement by creating a place where residents, farmers, and producers connect for a happier, healthier Weymouth.
- **Consider a winter farmers market.** While it is not recommended that the Town operate a farmers market that is separate from and/or in competition with Union Point, a winter farmers market for residents should be considered. According to the Department of Agricultural Resources, Massachusetts hosts approximately 240 summer and fall farmers markets but only 40 winter farmers markets across the Commonwealth. If a placemaking organization can be recruited at a reasonable price not to exceed the cost of the Town's 2016 summer farmers market operations (including in-kind management services), then a winter farmers market could be tested as a strategy for enhancing farmers market services for residents. **The addition of a winter farmers market, in place of a second summer farmers market, would provide residents access to fresh, local food up to eight months out of the year, exceeding farmers market services in Braintree, Hingham, and Quincy.**
- **Streamline Farm to Family paperwork.** In future seasons, all vendor forms associated with the Market Bucks token system should be incorporated into the Union Point Farmers' Market vendor application package, such that a vendor's application is not considered complete until the token system forms are completed and returned. In addition, participation in the Market Bucks token system should be made mandatory for all vendors of the farmers market, so as to protect shoppers' confidence in the value of the wooden tokens. This process should be discussed with Lola Grace Events in preparation for the 2018 Union Point Farmers' Market season.
- **Increase Farm to Family Program participation among Food Pantry clients.** In 2017, Farm to Family Program transactions increased 12 percent over the previous year. However, this increase was owed to a greater number of EBT shoppers participating in the Farm to Family Program. Transactions by Food Pantry clients decreased by comparison. In future seasons, the Town and its partners should strive to develop

new strategies to increase the number of Food Pantry clients utilizing the Farm to Family Program at Union Point.

- **Continue Sunday hours.** The Sunday hours of the Union Point Farmers' Market should be maintained for two reasons. First, the Union Point Farmers' Market has operated on Sundays since 2015, building a clientele and vendor group that are committed to attending the market on this day. Second, the Braintree and Hingham farmers markets both operate on Saturdays. These markets are operated by citizen-based nonprofits and attract more than 1,000 shoppers each Saturday. The Steering Committee believes that competition with these markets was a major factor in the Town's inability to attract shoppers and vendors in previous years.